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THE MORNING NEWS

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West to grant Kosovo full sovereignty today

PRISTINA (AFP) - On the eve of a meeting of Western powers gathered in the International Steering Group which will officially grant Kosovo full sovereignty, Pristina yesterday prepared to celebrate.



A huge stage was set up in the main Mother Teresa Square for an open air concert of bands from Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia and Bosnia planned for this evening to celebrate the end of international supervision over the territory.

The ISG, which consists of 23 EU countries, the United States and Turkey who have all recognised Pristina's 2008 declaration of independence, decided that time has come for Kosovo to "acquire full independence" despite Serbia's refusal to accept it. The group cited the territory's "clear support of a democratic and multi-ethnic state".

The formal announcement to lift the supervision is expected after an afternoon meeting to be attended by Dutch diplomat Pieter Feith, who chairs the International Civilian Office (ICO), prime minister Hashim Thaci and a host of other international and Kosovo officials.

Kosovo and its two million majority ethnic-Albanian population has been under some form of international administration since a NATO bombing campaign forced then Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic's forces out of the Serbian province in 1999.

On February 17, 2008, it unilaterally declared independence from Serbia and has been recognised by some 90 countries, including most EU nations. However, it continues to face opposition from Belgrade, Moscow and Kosovo's ethnic Serbs, who make up about six percent of the population, living mainly in the north on the border with Serbia.

The end of international supervision will not affect the presence of the NATO-led KFOR peacekeeping force in charge of the security situation or the European rule of law mission EULEX, which was created to boost the justice system.

ATA intensifies new all-island campaign



ORANJESTAD -- During a recent press conference held at the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) offices, ATA presented how their awareness campaign, dubbed, "Mi Compromiso" (My Commitment) is expected to work. ATA's main objective is to promote Aruba as a tourism destination including all our services and product. The modern day tourist comes to a destination not just for the beautiful beaches, and the climate, but they come looking for an experience to enrich them. This we can provide through, among others, our own people.

Hence, the major objective of the ATA campaign is to make the community aware of their role in the vision and actions with respect to tourism, and how to promote Aruba as a brand. We want to constantly raise the bar on the quality of our visitors. This means that Aruba wants to attract a better quality visitor who will leave more behind and so doing raise our GDP through tourism.

ATA wants to instil in everyone's mind that we are all responsible for giving the

visitor that feeling of happiness and tranquillity. The awareness campaign will serve as an incentive for the certification training program begun last October where those involved in the tourism industry is being taught or refreshed on all aspects of our tourism.

The campaign will also illustrate how ATA is contributing to the development of Aruba's tourism. It will illustrate what are the commitments and responsibility of the organization and its employees. The campaign will give everyone a clear

picture of the tasks of ATA and an idea of the dedication with which the employees fulfil their commitment.

During the campaign the spotlight will also be placed on those who have excelled in tourism and have won "Shoco" awards. Emphasis will also be placed on those who work indirectly in the tourism sector who in one way or the other contribute to the experience of the visitor. Hence, you will see many who work in different professions who contribute to the experience of our visitors.

Continued on page 4

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WCA 78th Anniversary Celebration Picnic

ORANJESTAD -- The Women's Club of Aruba is proud to announce their 78th anniversary on September 17, 2012 and will celebrate this accomplishment with a "Celebration Picnic"!

During each administrative year board members, committee members and the general members volunteer to make the community a better place. This year as they start the beginning of their administrative year with a new and energized board, they once again wish to show their appreciation and thank everyone involved in their organization for their commitment, hard work and dedication, and what better way than with a funfilled afternoon.

"We are celebrating this special occasion and would like you, as our close partners to join us! On Sunday, September 16, 2012 at the wonderful WESTIN Hotel Ballroom starting at 2:00 p.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m.," a WCA spokesperson said.

There will be a fun filled program, and surprising adult activities. Dress code is tropical sport and do put on your dancing shoes! WCA will also have kids animation

and entertainment for the young at heart. There will be a delicious picnic deli buffet to soothe everyone's appetite, not to forget the dessert and an open cash bar.

Join a family member or friend who is a member of this prestigious club, bring a friend or your children, grandchildren and do join the celebration!

To cover the cost the entrance ticket is at Afl 55,00 for adults and Afl 30,00 for children from 5 to 12 years.

Tickets are available at Manchitos, Surprise, Angelo's Studio. Also at WCA's Program Chairman Mrs. Bernadette Schouten at bernyschouten@hotmail.com, tel. 582 7226/592 4050 or omaira.wca@gmail.com, tel. 582 4143/ 592 85 25 for more information and/or tickets.

"Secure your tickets; as luck will also be present and will be looking for a winner of our fabulous door prizes and raffles, thus participate!"

"Simply said, "do join us" making this event amemorable one! We look forward in greeting you on Sunday, September 16, 2012 at the WESTIN Hotel," the spokesperson said.

ATA presents series of interesting events for September



ORANJESTAD -- During a recent press conference, the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) announced the expansion of their awareness campaign "Mi Compromiso" (My Commitment). They also elaborated on their events planned for the month of September.

During the month of September, they will be focusing on the importance of tourism especially within the context of the upcoming International Tourism Day as proclaimed by WTO to be held on September 27th.

The first events held in September was the awareness day combined with a fundraising for the Aruba Animal Rights foundation (ARA). This activity was held yesterday, September 9.

The focus of this event was the problem of the ill-treatment of animals and the problem of stray dogs on our streets. "My commitment to the welfare of our animals" is ARA's slogan for their awareness campaign of stickers and flyers.

ARA volunteers and volunteers from the Government Vet Services, ATA, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Tourism Product Enhancement Fund were all actively involved in sharing informa-

tion about the ARA cause for which all their partners are working so diligently.

Then, on September 21st together with the Aruba Ports Authority (APA) through the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCA) they will organize a training titled: "Shore Experiences: Profitable & Sustainable." The organization to provide the workshop is the "Aquila Center for Cruise Excellence." Aquila is a Canadian tour operator with 30 years of experience in the tourism industry and with 20 years providing service to cruise lines.

Anyone interested in learning more about the cruise market is welcome to attend the free training. They will learn of the importance of the cruise business, its role and of the opportunities to improve our port and destination. For more information, contact Rosie Arends at rosie.arends@arubaports.com before September 19th.

On the 27th of September ATA has her corporate event where the plans, projections and strategies for 2013 will be presented to everyone. They expect to also have an international speaker to talk about "customer service" and to provide us with important tips for our tourism industry.

They will also offer a special lecture to students of the University and of the EPI, and EPB Horeca by the same speaker. Later on the general public will also have an opportunity to participate in a special session. The special speaker will discuss the results of a recent study.

The last event for September will be 19th edition of the "Aruba Reef Care Project," which is a project initiated at ATA and is now organized by the Aruba Reef Care Foundation supported by Santa Rosa. ATA still has an important role as one of the main sponsors of this project. The project's main objective is to create awareness on the island for maintaining a clean environment, especially the marine life. For more information on this project, contact Castro Perez at 586-0820 or 630-3693, or arubareefcare@gmail.com.

Aruba Tourism Authority is intent on being an organization engaged in innovative and effective marketing, positioning Aruba as a tourist destination of the highest level, with a focus on a quality experience for all visitors to Aruba. For more information on Aruba's tourism visit the website: www.aruba.com or "like" them on facebook/oficinaditurismo.

Explore Aruba's app.
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Work advancing nicely in front of Airport



ORANJESTAD -- In less than one month, it appears that the work on the spiral rotunda in front of the Airport has progressed considerably. They have removed the asphalt covering from the entire area where work is to be carried out. The different companies can now do

their digging and laying of the necessary pipes, wires and cables. Additionally there will be the planting of light poles, electricity wires and an irrigation system for the green areas.

At the moment, the utility companies are working on the distribution of cables and pipes to ensure the proper and perfect functioning of all utility services. Everyone has their particular work crew and equipment but they are all moving along perfectly without getting into each other's way. Obviously, they all have a time table to adhere

to. And, all is in sync with the planning detailed by the architect in charge of the project.

In view of the large flow of traffic using this area, it is essential that the work be done accurately and carefully. It is also imperative that the rotunda be completed by December. Every two weeks the government meets with the InfraTeam to keep abreast of how the work is progressing. One primary objective in the whole process is to minimize the inconvenience to traffic in the area during this construction period.

Currently it may appear as though not much is taking place on the site. This is because they are basically working with laying pipes and cables underground. But as soon as this underground phase is completed, we will begin seeing the work continue on the above ground phase.

As an example, ELMAR is busy laying a fiber-optic cable underground, also a signal cable to control the electrical system and to identify where a problem may arise.

Continued on page 4

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Work advancing nicely . . .

Continued from page 3

SETAR, on the other hand is placing their wires, including a fiber-optic cable, in a different underground channel.

WEB is busy adapting their piping network for an efficient distribution of water to all areas and to the airport and to the center of the rotunda.

According to Ing. Raffy Kock, leader of the InfraTeam, this project has a price tag of 7 million Aruban florins and plays an important role as the starting point of what is to become the Green Corridor. This is the project which will run all the way to San Nicolas and is also connected to the Linear Park.

Dutch polls a close race in uncertain times for Europe

THE HAGUE (AFP) - The Netherlands votes Wednesday to elect a new parliament for the second time in two years after a tight race dominated by economic uncertainty thanks to Europe's seemingly endless debt crisis.

A resurgent Labour (PvdA), led by Diederik Samsom, has drawn level with outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte's leading Liberal VVD party at 35 seats each in the 150-seat Lower House, according to the latest Ipsos Synovate poll published by public broadcaster NOS late Saturday.

Rutte, who became the first Liberal Dutch premier since World War I in 2010, has gone on the offensive, calling the PvdA "dangerous for the Netherlands" in a newspaper interview Saturday.

He claimed that should Labour win, jobs would be lost and long queues at hospitals reminiscent of previous Labour governments would return. Samsom dismissed the claims.

Both 45-year-old Rutte's People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) and the second-placed PvdA led by former Greenpeace activist Samsom, 41, have taken on the eurocrisis and austerity as just one of many election themes.

It was a dispute over budget cuts to bring the Netherlands, the eurozone's fifth-largest economy, back to below a European Union three-percent deficit target that led to the collapse of Rutte's minority coalition in April.

Ahead of Wednesday's vote, the budget cuts that are hitting Dutch pockets hard are

again weighing heavily on the minds of some 12.5 million eligible voters.

"One of the most important issues in the election is the economic crisis and austerity," Andre Krouwel, political scientist at Amsterdam's Free University, told AFP.

Both the Liberals and Labour are pro-Europe but because of spending cuts to pay for spendthrift southern European countries they are faced with an electorate that is increasingly hostile towards Brussels.

The two leading parties are offering different solutions, said Krouwel.

"While the VVD is for strict austerity" including cutting the number of civil servants to bring the budget deficit below the EU's ceiling by next year, Labour "believes in a certain amount of investment to kick-start the economy."

Opposed to austerity, the PvdA plans to reduce the budget to balance it by 2017, while not worrying too much about getting the deficit below the Brussels-imposed target by next year.

"In a sense, the VVD is closer to somebody like Germany's (Chancellor) Angela Merkel, while the PvdA would be closer to France's Francois Hollande," said Krouwel.

Parties such as the far-right Party for Freedom (PVV) of platinum-haired politician Geert Wilders -- which made exiting the EU and the eurozone its central theme -- are not benefiting because people "realise that leaving Europe is not an option," added Krouwel.

Polls showed the PVV by

Saturday with 19 seats, down five from its 24 garnered in the 2010 elections.

On the far-left too, polls showed initial support waning for the Socialist Party (SP) under former schoolteacher Emile Roemer.

A month ago, pollsters put the SP's support as high as 39 seats, but that has substantially dropped according to various polls, with Ipsos Synovate giving the party 21 seats on Saturday night, putting it in third place.

Roemer in an interview yesterday with the Buitenhof television program asked for debate to ban opinion polls in the weeks ahead of the elections. "If you do that you take the hype away," he said.

But less than a week ahead of the elections -- the fifth in a decade -- many voters still remain undecided, fed up with promises made by politicians, political communications professor Claes de Vreese of the Amsterdam University told AFP.

A study published by Ipsos Synovate and broadcast on national television on Thursday said as many as 43 percent of all voters have yet to make up their minds.

"Anything can still happen," De Vreese told AFP.

The aftermath of the polls could also see a long period of political wrangling to form a coalition, amid Europe's swirling debt crisis when swift decisions need to be taken.

"We are dealing with a politically very fragmented landscape," said De Vreese. "But most voters want a stable coalition (government)."

Announcement of the Aruba Bankers Association

ORANJESTAD – The Aruba Bankers' Association (ABA) has followed the developments regarding the Valero Refinery closely and recognizes the seriousness of the situation as it presents itself today. Although the refinery will continue certain activities, the decreased scope of its operations will affect a large group of our community, either direct or indirectly. Through this press release the banks wish to extend themselves to all their borrowing clients who have been affected by the latest developments.

"As ABA we announce that Aruba Bank, Banco di Caribe, Caribbean Mercantile Bank and RBC Royal Bank Aruba are willing to cooperate with the affected clients to do whatever is feasible in each specific case to address their situation. Each case will be evaluated

separately based on the current financial situation of the individual involved. The banks are willing to consider different alternatives to help alleviate the current financial burden, such as the restructuring of loans or interest payments to bridge the period."

The banks realize that there are other projects in the community that are being worked on but the immediate impact on employees and companies will have to be addressed now. In the short term the banks will meet with these companies, the unions, and all other stakeholders in its effort to address and or gain more insight on this serious matter.

The Aruba Bankers' Association advises the affected clients to contact their bank as soon as possible to receive guidance and assistance on their financial situation.

ATA intensifies campaign

Continued from page 1

Some of the faces who will be spotlighted during the campaign are: Vicente Kock, local wine maker, Gerrit Grif-fith winner of a "Lifetime achievement award 2012," and Jerusha Rasmijn, manager of the "Aruba Convention Bureau." Each one of them in their respective areas of expertise carries the commitment and passion in their hearts and reflects what ATA wants to portray.

During the press conference announcing this campaign, Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, CEO of ATA to-

gether with Sjeidi Feliciano, and Mario Croes, Senior PR & Corporate Communication Specialist, Branding & Advertising, elaborated on the campaign and expressed their enthusiasm for the project.

The campaign will include different interactive aspects and communication via Facebook, television, newspapers and radio. Everyone should bear in mind that each one of us must be committed to our country, particularly to the tourism of our island. We ought to be committed with love, dedication and passion.

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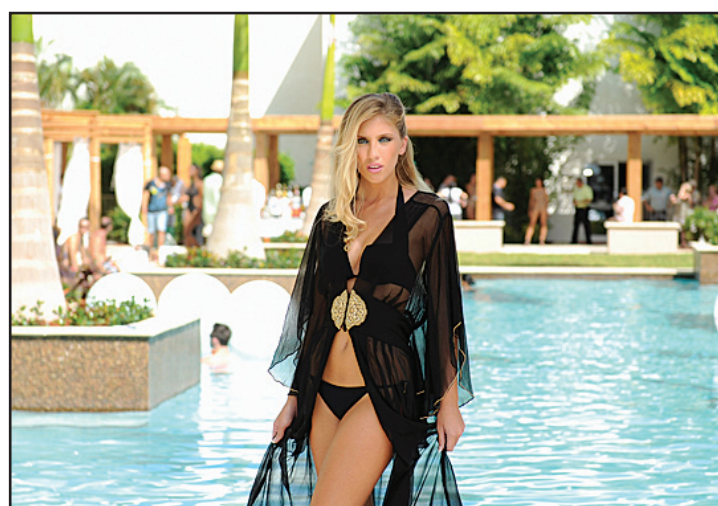
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Aqua Di Lara designer returns for the 2nd edition of Aruba In Style fashion week

Storms beaches of Aruba for international look book and catalogs production.

MONTREAL, QC – Designer swimwear brand Aqua Di Lara stormed the luxurious Renaissance Aruba Resort and Casino, a secluded 40-acre island paradise, in the beautiful tropical destination of Aruba for its Spring/Summer 2013 ad campaign.

Shooting with the stunning Samantha along the emerald waters of Aruba, the campaign captures the style and tropical elegance of this breathtaking



location. Aqua Di Lara creative director, Reyhan Sofraci, will be introducing Aqua Di Lara's 2013 collection split into new White Label and Black Label collections. Shot under the sun on one of Aruba's stunning beaches, the White Label collection takes you away with exotic cascades of colors and beautiful, lush and texturized

prints. The Black Label collection, shot along the elegant poolsides of the Renaissance Resort, is more edgy, composed of exotic skins and mosaics of deep tones of reflective colour.

"This is one of the most beautiful places in the world, and we are very excited to be shooting our latest campaign here," said Sofraci, "Aruba is stunning and I can't wait to come back

again to relax and soak in its beautiful waters."

Aqua Di Lara's recent collections have been seen on music artists, celebrities, and trendsetters, including Keri Hilson, Ivanka Trump, and Tyra

Banks. Drawing inspirations from the many wonders of the world, Aqua Di Lara has been featured in high-end publications and has garnered a strong international following.

The new Aqua Di Lara 2013 collection will be available in Canada, the Caribbean, the US, Europe and various

online retailers around the globe.

AQUA DI LARA will present a luxury collection of silk kaftans and amazing swimwear at the exclusive Renaissance Island on Sunday November 4th, 2012.



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Serbia says it has witness to Kosovo organ harvesting

BELGRADE (AFP) - Serbia said yesterday it had a former Kosovo rebel witness who allegedly took part in removing the heart of a Serb prisoner for the international black market in organs during the 1990s Kosovo conflict.

"We have a witness who testified about a medical procedure, done in northern Albania, that consisted of harvesting organs from Serbs kidnapped during the 1998-99 conflict in Kosovo," Serbia's war crimes prosecutor Vladimir Vukcevic told AFP.

"He described a surgery harvesting a heart from a Serb prisoner at a location near (the northern Albanian town of) Kukes in the late 1990s," and transporting the organ to the Rinas airport near the capital Tirana, the prosecutor said.

It was not immediately clear if the patient was dead or alive when the operation started, and the prosecutor

would not give any more details.

The witness told prosecutors he received special medical training in how to harvest organs and described the operation he took part in "in detail", according to the prosecution.

He added the heart "was sold on the black market", Vukcevic said.

The prosecutor would not give any more details about the identity of the witness, other than to say he was a former KLA member currently under strict protection measures.

Claims of organ harvesting by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) during and after the 1998-99 conflict are being investigated by the European Union.

Council of Europe rapporteur Dick Marty alleged in a hard-hitting 2010 report that senior KLA commanders -- including current Kosovo prime minister Hashim Thaci -- were

involved in organised crime.

The group carrying out organ trafficking during and after the conflict with Serbian forces was closely linked to Thaci, according to Marty.

The report said that organs were taken from the bodies of prisoners, many of them Serbs, held by the KLA in Albania at the time. Thaci and his government as well as Albania have denied the accusations and condemned Marty's report.

"We have been investigating and checking his claims for more than a year and we estimate that the information this witness has given is true," Vukcevic said.

Following Marty's report, the European Union named US prosecutor John Clint Williamson to conduct a probe.

Refusing to reveal more details for the moment, Vukcevic said he expected "that the witness' testimony will help prosecutor Williamson's probe".

Arafat Foundation: 'No need for more proof' of poison

RAMALLAH, Palestinian Territories (AFP) - The Yasser Arafat Foundation said yesterday there was "no need" for more proof the Palestinian leader was poisoned in what appeared to be a stance against French plans to exhume his body.

"Since the formation of this Foundation, it has forcefully held on to the fact that Yasser Arafat died abnormally after being killed by a poison which was unidentified at the time," it said in a statement.

"The Foundation does not see a need here for more proof."

The statement was issued just days after a delegation of French magistrates said they would travel to travel to the West Bank to investigate following claims Arafat may have succumbed to poisoning by the radioactive substance polonium.

No date has been given for the trip which would involve forensic officers exhuming the body and taking samples for laboratory testing in an investigation sought by Arafat's widow Suha.

Speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity, a source

from the Foundation said they would only agree to a further examination of his body if it was conducted as part of an international investigation committee.

"If there is an international committee, we will agree to the body being checked," he said, without explaining further.

Arafat died in a French military hospital near Paris on November 11, 2004 and French experts were unable say what had killed him, with many Palestinians subscribing to the belief that he was poisoned by Israel.

Arafat's nephew, Nasser al-Qidwa, who heads the Arafat Foundation, has long insisted that Israel was behind his uncle's death but a Palestinian investigation into such allegations ruled out poisoning, AIDS and cancer.

Last month, French prosecutors opened a murder inquiry into Arafat's death after Al-Jazeera news channel broadcast an investigation in which Swiss experts said they found high levels of radioactive polonium on his personal effects.

Saudi ministry: Eight wanted Qaeda suspects surrender

RIYADH (AFP) - Eight Saudis wanted for alleged links to Al-Qaeda have handed themselves to the authorities, the state news agency SPA reported yesterday.

The surrender was overseen by the families of those wanted and a center headed by Deputy Interior Minister Mohammed bin Nayef, the interior ministry said in a statement carried by SPA.

The center launched in 2006 aims to draw former Al-Qaeda militants away from radical Islamist ideology.

The interior ministry urged others "to return to their senses and to stop following those who seek to use them as tools."

On August 26, Saudi authorities announced they had foiled a terror plot by elements suspected of links to Al-Qaeda, mostly Yemenis, and busted two extremist cells in Riyadh and the port city of Jeddah.

They said the suspects were working on "recruiting elements to execute criminal attacks targeting security forces, citizens and foreign residents, as well as public installations."

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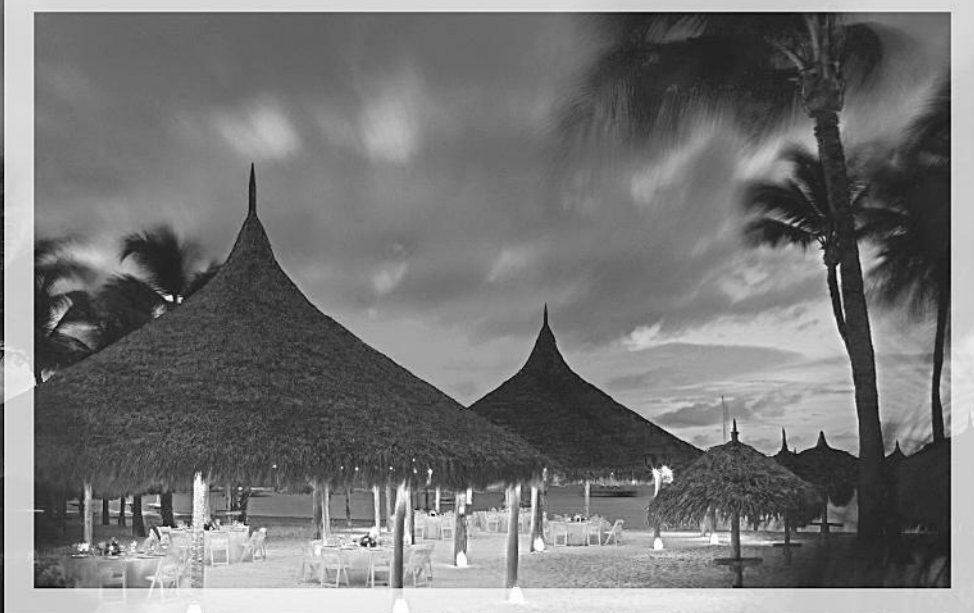
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Wave of attacks kills at least 88 in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) - A wave of more than 25 attacks across Iraq killed at least 88 people and wounded more than 350 on Saturday and Sunday, security and medical sources said, with the security forces and markets among the targets.

While insurgents opposed to the Baghdad government are regarded as weaker than in past years, they are still capable of launching periodic mass-casualty attacks across the country.

The latest attacks came as Iraq's Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, a leading Sunni, was sentenced in absentia on Sunday to hang for murder, although the carnage began hours before the sentence was handed down.

In the deadliest attack, two car bombs exploded in a market on Sunday near the Imam Ali al-Sharqi shrine in southern Iraq, a security official said.

Dr Ali al-Alaa, a Maysan province health department of-

ficial, said the blasts killed 14 people and wounded 60.

Before midnight on Saturday, gunmen assaulted an army checkpoint near Balad north of Baghdad and a roadside bomb exploded when additional soldiers arrived at the scene.

Eleven soldiers, including two officers, were killed and eight wounded, an army colonel and a medical source at Balad hospital said.

A police captain was also shot dead on Saturday night in the town of Garma, security and medical officials said.

Early on Sunday, a car bomb exploded in a car park at the state-owned North Oil Company in Kirkuk in north Iraq, after which two other bombings in the city killed 10 people and wounded 153, said Sadiq Omar Rasul, head of the Kirkuk health directorate.

West of Kirkuk, a car bomb seriously wounded six soldiers, army Captain Taha Khalaf said, while another in Hawija, also west of the city,

wounded two people, security and medical sources said.

Three car bombs exploded in predominantly Shiite areas of the Iraqi capital on Sunday night.

A car bomb hit a market in the Washash area of west Baghdad, killing at least seven people and wounding at least 21, an interior ministry official and a medical official said.

Another car bomb killed at least five people and wounded 22 near a restaurant in Shuala, while a third exploded in a commercial area of Hurriyah, killing three people and wounding 14, both in north Baghdad, the official and a medical said.

Three soldiers were killed in clashes with insurgents in the Abu Ghraib area, west of Baghdad, an interior ministry official and a medical source from Abu Ghraib hospital said.

And three car bombs in Taji, north of the capital, killed one person and wounded at least seven.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Dutch cops probe triple murder

THE HAGUE (AFP) - Dutch police launched a large-scale probe yesterday after finding the bodies of three people including a policeman at a home in the small eastern village of Keekerdome near the German border.

"A police team of some 20 investigators yesterday afternoon started their investigation," after the bodies were discovered earlier during the day, Dutch police said in an online statement.

The bodies of two men and a woman were found around noon (1000 GMT) by a neighbour who earlier noticed one of the victims' pets was very agitated, the local De Gelderland

der newspaper said on its website.

"The relationship between the police officer and the other two victims is being investigated," the police statement added, saying "all scenarios are being looked at at the moment".

Gelderland-Zuid police spokesman Paul Koetsier confirmed a shooting incident to AFP but declined to give further details. The names and ages of the victims were not released.

Keekerdome is some 14 kilometres (nine miles) east of Nijmegen, situated next to the Duffeldt dike, a popular cycling route in the area.

Alps killings survivor back in Britain, sister out of coma

CLAYGATE, United Kingdom (AFP) - A four-year-old girl who survived the slaying of her family in the French Alps returned to Britain yesterday as her wounded elder sister, seven, emerged from a coma.

Zeena al-Hilli, who lay motionless under her mother's corpse for eight hours, was brought back to England, while Zainab, the only other survivor, emerged from an artificial coma.

Meanwhile British police again quizzed relatives and scoured the family home in the search for clues, while their French counterparts combed over the scene once more and refused to rule out any possible motives for the deadly attack.

"The little girl has come out of the artificial coma but she is under sedation and her speech is not yet audible," Annecy prosecutor Eric Maillaud told AFP on Zainab.

She was shot in the shoulder and beaten around the head, suffering a fractured skull. Police are treating her as a key witness and hope she can provide some clues when she is ready to talk.

Zeena, who survived the at-

tack on Wednesday by hiding under her dead mother's skirt in the back seat, is now back in Britain, Maillaud added.

The girls' father Saad al-Hilli, mother Ikbal and an elderly female relative were gunned down in their car on a forested Alpine road. A passing cyclist was also killed.

Their uncle Zaid al-Hilli was going through a second day of talks with the investigators, a source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

He pre-sented himself to police in Britain following the murder, denying media reports that the brothers were involved in a financial dispute. It is understood he was not held overnight in police custody.

British forensics teams began a second day of searches at the family home in Claygate, a quiet, wealthy commuter village some 15 miles (25 kilometres) southwest of London. It is expected the search will continue today.

Prayers were held in local church services yesterday, while on the village's recreation grounds, local youth football teams lined up to stand for a minute's silence in remembrance of those killed.



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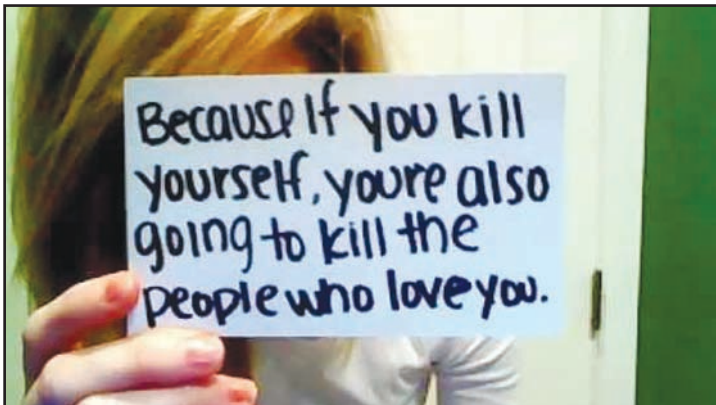
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Health & Living

One million people commit suicide each year: WHO



GENEVA (AFP) - One million people die by their own hand each year, accounting for more deaths than wars and murders put together, the World Health Organisation said yesterday, calling for urgent action to address the problem.

"Data from the WHO indicate that approximately one million people worldwide die by suicide each year. This corresponds to one death by suicide every 40 seconds," the organisation said in a report launched ahead of the World Suicide Prevention Day Today.

And while the number of deaths by suicide is staggering, the number of attempts each year is 20 times higher, the WHO said, pointing out that five percent of people in

the world try to kill themselves at least once during their lifetime.

And the problem is getting worse, the organisation said, insisting that "given the magnitude of the public health problem of suicidal behaviours", urgent action was needed.

"As suicide is largely preventable, it is imperative that governments, through their health, social and other relevant sectors, invest human and financial resources in suicide prevention," the report said.

According to Dr. Shekhar Saxena, who headed the team behind the report, suicide rates have risen sharply in some parts of the world in recent years, with some countries seeing their rates jump by as

much as 60 percent.

"Although suicide continues to remain a serious problem in high income countries, it is the low and middle income countries that bear the larger part of the global suicide burden," the report said, adding: "It is also these countries that are relatively less equipped to prevent suicide".

The highest documented suicide rates can be found in Eastern European countries like Lithuania and Russia, while they are lowest in Latin America, WHO said.

The United States, Western European countries and Asia fell in the middle of the range, the report showed, but stressed that statistics are not available for many countries in Africa and South-East Asia.

Globally, suicide is meanwhile the second cause of death worldwide among 15-19 year-olds, with at least 100,000 adolescents killing themselves each year, according to the study.

Among adults, the suicide rate is highest among those aged 75 and older, the WHO said, pointing out that "elderly people are likely to have higher suicide intent and use more lethal methods than younger people, and they are less likely to survive the physical consequences of an attempt".

The report also showed that men were three times more likely to commit suicide, but that three times as many women as men attempted to kill themselves.

"The disparity in suicide rates has been partly explained by the use of more lethal means and the experience of more aggression and higher intent to die, when suicidal, in men than women," it explained.



BERLIN: A protester wearing a kippa attends a demonstration for the religious right of circumcision at Bebelplatz in Berlin, Germany, on September 09, 2012. Around 500 mainly Jewish but some Christian and Muslim protesters gathered in Berlin Sunday to demand the right to circumcision after a disputed court ruling in Germany outlawing the rite.

AFP PHOTO



TOULOUSE: A French tobacco seller receives payment from a client buying cigarette packs in front of a white sheet as part of a national day of protest as the government is considering to plain packaging of cigarettes, banning all logos and brand descriptions on September 6, 2012 in Toulouse, southern France. Tobacco products in Australia will be sold from December, in drab, uniform packaging with graphic health warnings in a groundbreaking move that has attracted worldwide interest. The World Health Organization has called on other countries to pass similar laws.

AFP PHOTO

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Sci-Tech

Liberia forests sold off in secret logging contracts: report



(AFP)- Forty percent of Liberia's forests have been sold off in secretive and often illegal contracts, Global Witness said, just days after the country's president announced a probe into the issuing of logging permits.

An investigation by the London-based natural resource watchdog has shown how, despite efforts to reform the country's logging sector, companies have used a legal loophole to score contracts covering a quarter of the nation's landmass.

The report comes after

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf announced on Friday an independent probe into the controversial permits, after suspending the managing director of the Forestry Development Authority, Moses Wogbeh.

"The new logging contracts termed Private Use Permits now cover 40 percent of Liberia's forests and almost half of Liberia's best intact forests," said a press release from Global Witness.

"They have given companies linked to notorious Malaysian logging giant Sam-

ling unparalleled access to some of Liberia's most pristine forests."

Samling and its subsidiaries have been involved in cases of illegal logging from Cambodia to Guyana to Papua New Guinea.

The Private Use Permits were designed to allow private land owners to cut trees on their property. But the investigation found that the 66 permits that have been issued are in fact allowing logging companies to sneak past Liberia's carefully crafted forest laws and regulations.

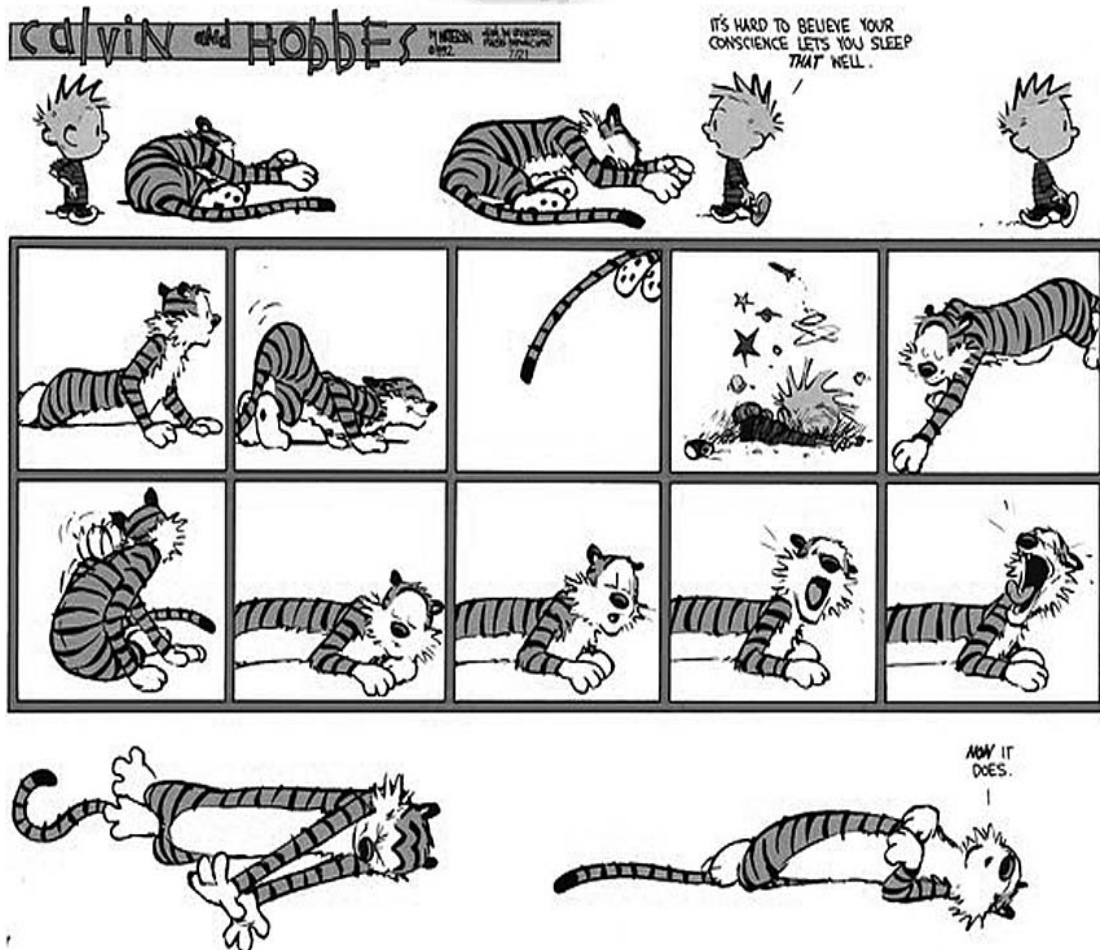
Liberia's forests make up 42 percent of what is left of the Upper Guinean Rainforest -- just part of a fragmented system that once covered most of west Africa but has been reduced to 12 percent of its original reach.

Deforestation has been alarming, with 70 percent of the population involved in slash-and-burn farming, the country's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) told AFP in 2010.



SIENA (AFP) : Visitors admire the mosaic floor in the Siena cathedral, Italy. Magnificent Renaissance mosaics covering the sweeping marble floor in Siena cathedral have been unveiled to give visitors a rare glimpse of scenes it took local artists 500 years to create. The inlaid panels, usually covered to protect them from the thousands of visitors who flock to the Tuscan city each year, depict vivid stories from the Bible and classical antiquity, in black, white, green, red and blue marble. Made up of 56 panels designed by some 40 artists, the floor was described by 16th century historian Giorgio Vasari in his "Lives of Artists" as "the most beautiful, the greatest and most magnificent floor which was ever created."

COMICS



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ACROSS

1. Cow spout
6. "___ Weaver" (Millay)
10. Expert, commonly
14. "___ Kangaroo Down, Sport"
15. Baseballer Jesus
16. Valiant one
17. Profit
18. Kittiwake
19. Verbal
20. Big Band trumpeter of the '40s
22. She played Maude
23. Poet's "above"
24. Verdi masterpiece
27. Author Gordimer
31. Trumpeter Wynton
35. Trumpeter "Hot Lips" Page

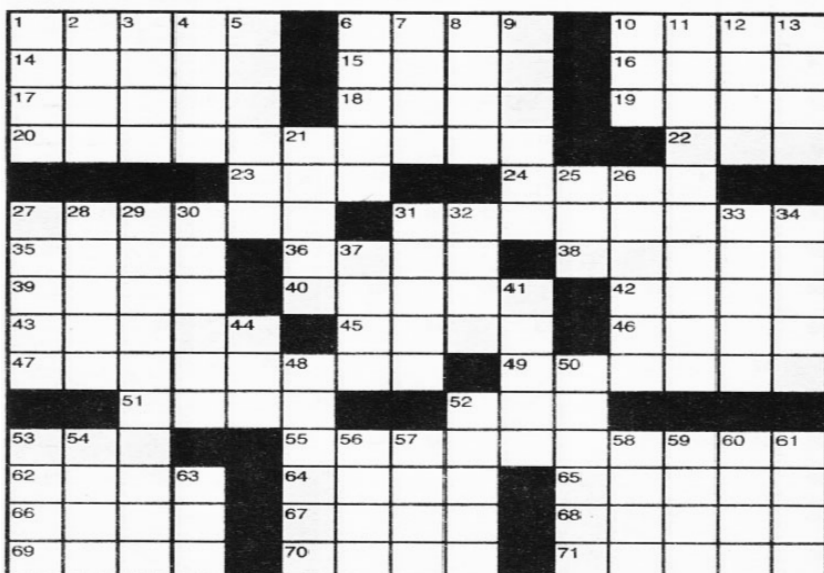
36. Proper partner
38. Quite sufficient
39. Wind: Fr.
40. Anglo-___
42. Sow
43. Christie and Karenina
45. Cowardly Lion's farm name
46. French river
47. Kollege of Musical Knowledge professor
49. June-September, in Melbourne
51. Say it ain't so
52. Calendar abbr.
53. Resort
55. Trumpeter Doc
62. Clean oneself
64. Disney film starring Jeff Bridges

65. Henri's school
66. Like Mr. Hyde
67. Give forth
68. Potato holders
69. Receptionist's spot
70. "There'll Be Some Changes ___"
71. Grabs

DOWN

1. Mormon War setting
2. Sutherland or Sills
3. Letter opening
4. Islamic title
5. Exhibit dependence
6. Horrible one of the comics
7. ___ Rock, California
8. Play part
9. Wave-emitting celestial

10. "___ Can I Turn To?"
11. Tijuana Brass frontman
12. "Dies ___" (Latin hymn)
13. Runner Budd
21. Army vehicles
25. "Happiness ___ warm puppy" (C. Schulz)
26. Sloe's tamer kin
27. Kim of "Vertigo"
28. Circus spot
29. Nashville Brass frontman
30. Entrance for fluid
31. College party of yore
32. Run ___ (be in a frenzy)
33. Actress Graff
34. Pesach repast
37. Level
41. More modern
44. Thesaurus ent.
48. Solar ___
50. Most aloof
52. Tooth, in Turin
53. It may run on dog power
54. Apply asphalt
56. Humorous author Bombeck
57. Partner of null
58. Sponsor of March Madness: abbr.
59. Item often in laundry limbo
60. Sommer of "The Prize"
61. Prohibition crime-fighter
63. Large deer



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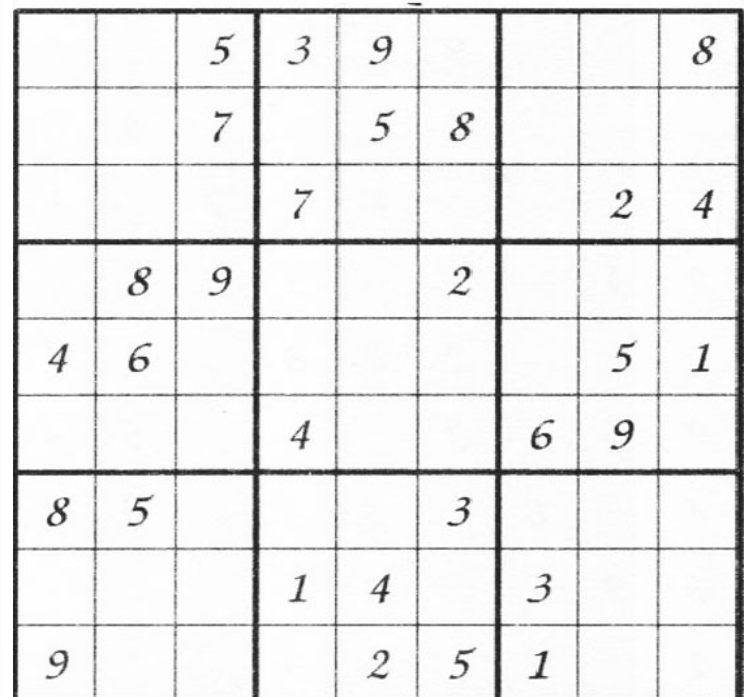
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9	L	I	S	Z	8	T	E	6
5	8	E	6	T	I	9	Z	L
6	T	Z	E	L	9	I	S	8
2	6	9	I	8	T	E	L	5
1	5	8	L	E	6	Z	9	T
L	E	T	Z	9	S	6	8	I
T	Z	S	9	I	L	8	6	E
E	1	6	8	5	Z	L	T	9
8	9	L	T	6	E	S	I	Z

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



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Romney: Fed action would not make a difference

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Republican White House challenger Mitt Romney said in an interview broadcast yesterday that a Federal Reserve boost to the economy would do little to create US jobs in the short term.

"I don't think that easing monetary policy is going to make a significant difference in the job market right now," Romney told NBC's "Meet the Press."

"I think what the nation needs is a change in fiscal policy. A different structure to our economic positions. And if we take the right course I believe you're going to see this economy come roaring back."

Government data Friday showing that the economy created only 96,000 jobs last month stoked speculation that the Fed would this week strengthen its commitment to near-zero interest rates or approve a third round of quantitative easing (QE) bond purchases.

Romney has been hammering Obama over the Labor Department figures which also showed that the unemployment rate dipped to 8.1 per-

cent, largely due to people becoming disenchanted and giving up looking for work.

France's Hollande vows economic recovery in two years


PARIS (AFP) - Socialist President Francois Hollande yesterday pledged 30 billion euros in new taxes and savings to balance the budget and fund a turnaround in two years and rejected criticism of dragging his feet.

Hollande also said a 75-percent wealth tax on incomes over one million euros (\$1.28 million) would not be diluted.

Hollande -- who has famously said he does not "like the rich" -- said 10 billion dollars would come from additional taxes on households "especially the well-heeled", 10 billion more from businesses and 10 billion from savings in government spending.

It would be the biggest hike in three decades.


He also vowed to curb unemployment, currently pegged at over three million, in a year's time.



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U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.79	1.81	1.83
Britiain	GBP	2.77	2.82	2.88
Switzerland	CHF	186.41	187.13	187.93
Netherlands	EUR	224.25	226.30	228.57
Sweden	SEK	25.68	26.40	27.20
Denmark	DKK	29.40	30.12	30.92
Norway	NOK	29.73	30.45	31.25
Japan	JPY	223.67	225.71	227.98

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FINANCE

Obama hints at US budget cuts if re-elected

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama hinted yesterday that Americans can expect budget cuts if he is re-elected in November, telling an interviewer that some spending programs "are worthy" but unaffordable.

Seeking to counter Republican criticism that his administration has increased the national debt to \$16 trillion, Obama said a balanced budget was the first step toward tackling fiscal woes and that would mean cutbacks.

"There are some programs that are worthy, but we just can't afford right now. And I'm willing to do more on that front," Obama said in an excerpt from a CBS News interview, noting that \$1 trillion in cuts have already been made.

"And there's still waste, there's still programs that don't work."

The Republicans attacked Obama last week for adding more than \$5 trillion to the national debt since he took office in 2009.

The figure stood at \$10.6 trillion when he entered the White House, but by implementing an economic stimulus plan aimed at heading off a depression the figure has soared -- negating the president's pledge to halve it by 2012.

But Obama criticized Romney in the interview aired yesterday for refusing to take what he called a "balanced approach" that cuts spending while raising taxes on the richest Americans.

"If we go back to the tax rates for folks making more than \$250,000 a year, back to the rates that we had under Bill Clinton, we can close the deficit, stabilize the economy, keep taxes on middle class families low, provide the cer-

tainty that I think all of us would be looking for," Obama pledged.

He said the problem with Romney's plan "is the math, or the arithmetic, as President (Bill) Clinton said, doesn't add up," in a reference to the latter's barnstorming speech at the Democratic National Convention.


Clinton said that the Republicans' plan to cut \$5 trillion in taxes will mean "they'll hurt the middle class and the poor" in order to cut taxes for the rich.

Or else, he continued, "they'll just do what they've been doing for more than 30 years now -- they'll go in and cut taxes way more than they cut spending ... and they'll just explode the debt and weaken the economy."

Obama has argued that his Republican predecessor George W. Bush deepened the national debt by imposing sweeping tax cuts and launching wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The public bailouts of US financial institutions in the wake of the global economic meltdown, also under Bush's tenure, caused the debt to spiral further.

SATURDAY'S Crossword Answer



Animal Rights Aruba awareness campaign underway



ATA and ARA volunteers share the love



Aruba is helping their four legged friends

Aruba's Minister of Tourism, Transport and Labor, Otmar Oduber, and the CEO of the Aruba Tourism Authority announced their sponsorship of a program to combat stray and abandoned dogs on Aruba streets, as proposed by Animal Rights Aruba, or ARA.

The four point program being funded by the Tourism Enhancement Fund, made awareness the first order on their agenda. This began yesterday morning at the welcome pavilion of the Linear Park, on L.G. Smith Boulevard. ATA and ARA volunteers distributed pamphlets and stickers reminding the public of the commitment to caring for a canine companion. All those that care about our furry friends were asked to proudly display their bumper stickers in a show of support for the cause.

Items offered for sale to help support the effort were the famous "Just Desserts" cookbook, a compilation of recipes for traditional island



Minister Oduber and Gal Friday Carolina Rojas

treats, specifically published to assist ARA. De Sukertuin Restaurant sold snacks to raise funds, and information was provided by local veterinary offices regarding spaying and neutering a pet.

The ARA program is also supporting legislature to reg-

ulate the human treatment of dogs, and curb unwanted reproduction, which puts more dogs out on the streets. Educational programs will continue as well as an organized drive to neuter and spay.

By Rosalie Klein



Cookbook sales to help raise funds



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Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and families, famed hotelier Ed Malone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters, caterers, airline pick-up and

drop-off; they even boast a shopping service to stock your shelves before arrival.

Gold Coast accommodations are elegant and spacious,

connection, individual washer/dryer, and are fully air-conditioned. Cribs, high chairs and hair dryers are available for a modest fee. Concierge



offering privacy for parents or a few couples. Beautifully appointed kitchens and bathrooms grace each abode; barbecues and lounges are provided for friendly cookouts and truly savoring the island life. All homes come with cable TV, high-speed fiber-optic Internet

services to arrange rental cars, spa appointments, activities and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

Check-in for your holiday escape is conducted in the comfort of your vacation home, not while waiting on line at check-in desk. In every way, Gold Coast seeks to pamper their guests while providing them with the feeling of being in a cozy community, not the normally bustling resort, particularly experienced during the major holidays. If you wish an optimal vacation experience with great savings, visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com to get acquainted with the community and the layout, details and availability of accommodations, or call 586-2200 to talk personally to a Gold Coast representative.



Healthy, tasty treats on the menu at Lecca Lecca

No foray to Oranjestad is complete without a stop to refresh and refuel at Lecca Lecca, the stylish "Gelato Shoppe" located right in the main bus terminal. This adorable eatery sports a menu that reflects the passion of its owner, Milly Lacle, for "healthy, natural foods, for a healthy body."

The idea of a sweet treat being good for you is contrary to everything we are being told today, but Milly did her homework before establishing her gelato and sorbetto factory on the second floor. Her recipes come from a respected gelato house in Italy, where they have been producing the refreshing, low or no fat product since the 1800's. She continues the tradition of using only fresh fruit juices and natural ex-



Favorites and unique flavors like grapefruit and lemon mint

process. The end product is whipped light and fluffy naturally, producing a satisfying treat drastically lower in fat, sugar and calories than traditional ice cream.

Unique flavors found nowhere else are a revelation. For a delightful surprise and pure refreshment, sample the grapefruit, passion fruit or carrot sorbetto; the rich, dark, sugar-free chocolate gelato is absolutely sinful, without the guilty conscience! They also have a unique collection of yogurt gelatos swirled with

fresh fruit sorbetto in delightful combinations.

Lecca Lecca offers an attractive lunch menu including quiche made with only fresh vegetables, and sandwiches on crusty bread they prepare in their own bakery. Indulge in the soup of the day for a hearty

sampling of authentic Aruban cooking.

Opened Monday through Saturday from 9:30 AM until 7:00 PM; it is a must do while in Oranjestad for a refreshing treat, with the emphasis on FRESH!



Fresh vegetable quiche

tracts to as flavoring.

There are absolutely no artificial colorants or preservatives in the gelato and sorbetto, which is produced fresh daily; leftovers at the end of the day are donated to children's homes Casa Cuna or Imeldahoff. They have over 60 flavors on their roster with 18 available at the shop each day, including at least one sugar-free and one-gluten free for those with special dietary needs. All the gelato is made from organic milk flown in from Italy, guaranteed free of steroids and antibiotics. Lecca Lecca pasteurizes the milk in their factory, to be sure there are no chemicals used in the



Tutti frutti a blend of fresh exotic fruits

Farewell London Paralympics 2012

Global superstars close Games



A giant ring of fire encircles the national flags carried into the stadium by paralympic athletes.

LONDON (AFP) - Coldplay, Rihanna and Jay-Z on Sunday brought the curtain down on the London Paralympics, in a celebratory mood amid claims that the Games had helped usher in a "seismic" shift in attitudes towards disability.

The British band opened the planned three-hour extravaganza of song and dance, watched by 80,000 spectators at the Olympic Stadium and many of the 4,200 athletes at trackside in the shadow of the burning Paralympic flame.

The show, entitled "Festival of the Flame", was a tribute to Britain's many artistic, cultural, musical and seasonal festivals and was billed as being a journey through the seasons to music and dance, artistic director Kim Gavin said.

Organisers hailed the Games as the biggest and most high-profile in its 52-year history, with more media attention and a record number of athletes from more than 160 countries, including for the first time reclusive North Korea.

London 2012 chief Sebast-

ian Coe said that with 2.7 million tickets sold, packed venues and vocal crowds, the Games had created a global platform for elite disabled sport and also helped change perceptions of people with disabilities.

"I really genuinely do think that we have had a seismic effect on shifting public attitudes," he told a news conference.

"I don't think people will ever see sport in the same way again. I don't think they will ever see disability in the same way again. We have talked about what we can do rather than what we can't do."

Earlier on Sunday, one of the stand-out performers of the Games, British wheelchair racer David Weir, was roared to victory and his fourth gold in the men's marathon around the landmarks of central London.

Australia beat Canada for "murderball" -- wheelchair rugby -- gold, while Russia got revenge over neighbours Ukraine for defeat in the seven-a-side football final in Beijing four years ago.

The final golds ended the action, which notably saw the Games' most high-profile athlete Oscar Pistorius stripped of his 100m and 200m crowns but then conclude the track and field programme with a stunning victory in the 400m.

London was awarded the Olympics and Paralympics in 2005 and has had to face doubts in particular over the cost of the project, security and whether the city's creaking transport system could cope with a massive influx of visitors.

But the efficient running of both events and the public response has defied naysayers who predicted chaos and a lack of enthusiasm.

The president of the International Paralympic Committee, Philip Craven, said the challenge was to maintain interest between now and the next Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016 -- as well as increase participation around the world.

"We have to really concentrate on getting every country doing more Paralympic sport," he added.

The daughter of German-Jewish neurologist Ludwig Guttmann, who organised the first recognised sporting event for disabled people in southern England in 1948, also said there was more work to do despite improvements since her father's time.

"We are not there yet. There is a way to go," said Eva Loeffler, highlighting continued issues around accessibility for disabled people in society.

More countries needed to send athletes to the Paralympics, she said, but added that the greater exposure afforded to Paralympians was positive.



South Africa's Oscar Pistorius crosses the line to win gold in the men's 400m - T44



Canada wrested the Paralympic men's wheelchair basketball title back from their old rivals Australia on Saturday with a hard-fought 64-58 victory in the final.



David Weir's fourth gold of Games and a silver for Shelly Woods in the wheelchair marathon confirm third place in medal table for ParalympicsGB

Paralympics medals table - Top 15

LONDON (AFP) - Final medals table Top 15 at the end of the 2012 Paralympic Games yesterday:

1-China 95 71 65 231	9-Poland 14 13 9 36
2-Russia 36 38 28 102	10-Netherlands 10 10 19 39
3-Great Britain 34 43 43 120	11-Iran 10 7 7 24
4-Ukraine 32 24 28 84	12-South Korea 9 9 9 27
5-Australia 32 23 30 85	13-Italy 9 8 11 28
6-United States 31 29 38 98	14-Tunisia 9 5 5 19
7-Brazil 21 14 8 43	15-Cuba 9 5 3 17
8-Germany 18 26 22 66	



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A rousing start for the 12th Annual Aruba Special Olympics National Games



Island dignitaries and Special Olympics committee

This past weekend over 200 special athletes competed in four sports disciplines for the

12th annual games of the Aruba Special Olympics, sponsored by Digicel Telecommunications Company. The opening ceremonies took place at the Guillermo Trinidad Stadium, with island dignitaries attending. Welcoming the audience and athletes to the games were President of Parliament, Paul Croes, Minister of Social & Economic Affairs and Culture, Michelle Hooyboer-Winkler, and the Aruba Special Olympics Committee, headed by Arturo Werleman, Director of the Foundation for the Mentally Challenged. General Manager of Digicel, Remko van der Veldt, reiterated the company's staunch support, internationally, of Special Olympics, and his personal pride of being able to contribute to such a worthwhile effort.

The games began after special athletes, accompanied by an honor guard of students from the Aruba Police Academy, completed their torch run through Oranjestad to the stadium. They passed on the flame to Lesino Pantoflet of the Man Na Obra Center. The torch did a round of the stadium to finally rest in the hands of Jeremiah Werleman,

a gifted, autistic 14-year-old with a talent for mathematics, who is mainstreaming in normal schools, and with the police guard, had the honor of lighting the Olympic Flame.

The official ceremonies inaugurated the first night of track and field contests. Over the weekend, special athletes competed in Badminton at the Colegio Arubano gymnasium and soccer at the Britannia Field in Piedra Plat on Saturday. Yesterday, the games ended with Bacci Ball and an awards ceremony at the SVGA centers of Man Na Obra and Bibito Pin.

Athletes of all ages from schools and centers Sjabururi, Emmaskol, Paso Pa Futuro, Man na Obra, and Skol Caiqetio participated in this year's games. Arturo Werleman explained that they had barely 80 competitors when they started the annual Special Olympics twelve years past. This year, they had the presence of Nicole Hoevertsz, Director of the Aruba Swimming Bond and a member of the World Olympics Committee present, along Roy Mezas of Aruba's Olympic Committee, to demonstrate their endorsement of the program.

By Rosalie Klein



torch bearer and police honor guard



Jeremiah Werleman lights the Olympic Flame



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Printed by
Diario N.V.

Tel: 588-9517 / Fax: 588-9518
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12th Annual Aruba Special Olympics National Games

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Arturo Werleman and the Special Olympics Committee



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Cycling: Contador wins Vuelta to seal comeback

MADRID (AFP) - Spain's Alberto Contador, racing his first Grand Tour since returning from a two-year doping ban last month, won his second Tour of Spain crown on Sunday.

The Saxo-Bank rider, also a two-time Tour de France winner who lost his 2010 Tour and 2011 Giro titles after testing

positive for clenbuterol in 2010, safely negotiated the 21st and final 115km largely flat stage from Cercedilla to Madrid to claim victory.

Germany's John Degenkolb of the Argos-Shimano team won the final stage in 2hr 44min 57sec, Contador coming through buried in the main lead peloton in 54th spot.

The 29-year-old Contador clocked 84hr 59min 49sec for the race that covered a total distance of 3,300 kilometres, Alejandro Valverde (Movistar) and Joaquim Rodriguez (Katusha) completing an all-Spanish podium.

Valverde was 1min 16sec off Contador's pace, with long-time leader Rodriguez a fur-

ther 21sec adrift.

Contador had taken control of the Vuelta on Wednesday's Fuente De stage 17, producing a long-distance attack a day after having failed to shake off Rodriguez on the climb of the Cuitu Negro on stage 16.

His precious lead of 1:35 came under attack on Saturday in the gruelling climb of the

Bola del Mundo, with both Rodriguez and Valverde attacking the Pinto-born Contador.

But the champion showed all his experience to hold his nerve for a remarkable victory, the Spanish heavyweight trio having called a truce as the sprinters battled for the stage win on Sunday.